



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Hansard 13 May 2003

COUNTRY RACING

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.20 a.m.): Under this government we have seen a continuation of the gutting of the Queensland racing industry. The government has virtually gotten rid of Queensland country racing and it is now getting rid of regional administration. The firing of Steve Railton, Chief Steward, who was a man of integrity recognised across Australia, has heads shaking not only in Queensland but throughout the racing industry in Australia. He is a man of great integrity, a person who is recognised for his contribution to racing throughout this state and Australia. He was the perfect man to be the new integrity manager, if one was desired by Queensland Racing. Why did it not merely restructure his position?

How can we now trust in the integrity of Queensland Racing? That is a question many people in racing circles around Brisbane and Queensland are asking today. All of this was done by Bob Bentley, Minister Rose's man put in by her despite the protests of the industry. This is another example of the government's interference in the racing industry.

In today's *Australian* Bentley admits that he has been in dispute with Railton at board meetings. This move is a fundamental attack on the integrity of stewards. If anyone disagrees with Bentley as chair or stands up to him, they will be fired. With moves to the privatisation of the Queensland racing industry following the privatisation of the TAB, are we heading back to the bad old days of John Wren and race fixing? The smell in the upper reaches of Queensland Racing is getting stronger all the time.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Honourable members opposite can laugh all they want, but the situation in racing in Queensland, whether it be in Brisbane or in country racing, is diabolical. Any member who attended the last Burrandowan race meeting on the weekend would know that to be true.

Time expired.